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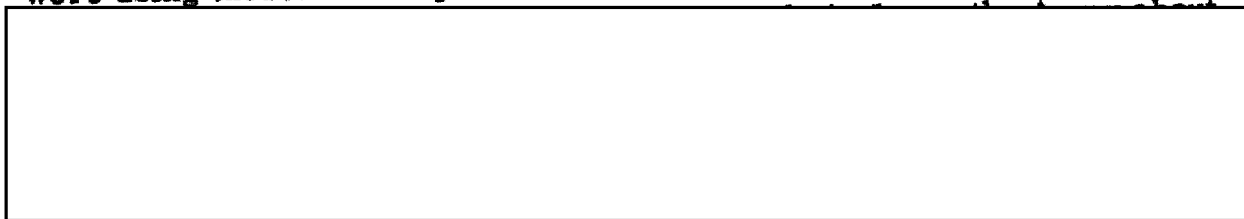
MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Briefing of Chairman Mahon on Laos

1. This morning Bob Michaels, on the staff of the House Appropriations Committee, called and said that Mr. Mahon would like a briefing this afternoon on Laos. He desires this in connection with the upcoming conference with the Senate committee on the defense appropriation bill, specifically the Cooper/Mansfield amendment on Laos as modified by the Church substitute amendment. As the amendment passed the Senate it provided: Sec. 643. In line with the expressed intention of the President of the United States, none of the funds appropriated by this Act shall be used to finance the introduction of American ground combat troops into Laos or Thailand.

2. The Director decided that the briefing should be given by Mr. Nelson. He and I met with Mr. Mahon and Messrs. Michaels and Preston of the Committee staff this afternoon. The Chairman began by asking Mr. Nelson "what are we really doing in Laos?" He said he had been briefed on our Laos program but didn't remember much about it other than to recall the name of Souvanna Phouma. Mr. Nelson gave Mr. Mahon a very general briefing on the situation in Laos and what we were doing there. In response to direct questions from the Chairman,

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3. Mr. Mahon reviewed the language of the Laos amendment as passed by the Senate and asked if the Agency had any problem with this. We said we did not. Mahon added that as of 9:00 a.m. this

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morning the Department of Defense had no problems with it but was not certain that the White House had focused on it.

4. Mr. Mahon instructed Michaels and Preston to have the Army "cocked and primed" to be available to brief the Committee on Laos programs if it should become necessary. His stated inclination was to go along with the amendment since it posed no real problems for anyone. It is anticipated that the House and Senate conferees will meet on the bill sometime tomorrow afternoon.

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Deputy Legislative Counsel

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